

often that has been the case over the years. You hear something from a constituent or read in the paper or see on the internet, and it is like, this can't be true.

And the one that stands out to me this week is this intention by the Departments of Justice, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services to pay up to \$450,000 per person of families who illegally crossed our border and were detained separately.

This is an absurd policy decision. It gives greater incentives for people to come to the United States and make that dangerous trek to our border. How can it be fair to our law-abiding American citizens?

This is a situation that makes no sense to me. And it is something that the Biden administration ought to immediately reject as out of bounds for commonsense and good judgment and, certainly, something that is damaging to the ability for us to have a lawful, sovereign border, and something that is very damaging to the citizens of this country but also to those who make the humanitarian challenge of traveling through Central America and Mexico to our sponsor border.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

VOTE ON DAVIDSON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the Davidson nomination.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Davidson nomination?

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS).

The result was announced—yeas 88, nays 10, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 456 Ex.]

YEAS—88

Baldwin	Daines	King
Barrasso	Duckworth	Klobuchar
Bennet	Durbin	Lankford
Blumenthal	Ernst	Leahy
Blunt	Feinstein	Lee
Booker	Fischer	Lujan
Boozman	Gillibrand	Lummis
Brown	Graham	Manchin
Burr	Grassley	Markey
Cantwell	Hagerty	McConnell
Capito	Hassan	Menendez
Cardin	Heinrich	Merkley
Carper	Hickenlooper	Moran
Casey	Hirono	Murkowski
Cassidy	Hoeven	Murphy
Collins	Hyde-Smith	Murray
Coons	Inhofe	Ossoff
Cornyn	Johnson	Padilla
Cortez Masto	Kaine	Paul
Cramer	Kelly	Peters
Crapo	Kennedy	Portman

Reed	Shaheen	Warner
Risch	Sinema	Warnock
Romney	Smith	Warren
Rosen	Stabenow	Whitehouse
Sanders	Sullivan	Wicker
Sasse	Tester	Wyden
Schatz	Thune	Young
Schumer	Toomey	
Scott (SC)	Van Hollen	

NAYS—10

Blackburn	Hawley	Shelby
Braun	Marshall	Tuberville
Cotton	Rubio	
Cruz	Scott (FL)	

NOT VOTING—2

Rounds Tillis

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the Harris nomination.

The Senator from North Carolina.

REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE—S. 1364

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that Calendar No. 50, S. 1364, the Lumbee Tribe of the North Carolina Recognition Act, be referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New Jersey.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to seek unanimous consent for eight to nine nominees to critical State Department posts.

Each of them moved through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee with bipartisan support, and the only reason the Senate has not confirmed them is due to the political obstinacy of a couple of my Republican colleagues. And the evidence of that is that when we have a vote, as we had earlier today for the Assistant Administrator of AID, it passed 59 to 40—59 to 40.

We have heard many complaints about the management of the State Department and the conduct of U.S. foreign policy in recent months. And while the State Department is not a perfect institution—for that fact, no institution is—its leadership was decimated by the prior administration.

The assistant secretaries and ambassadors who should be participating in the rebuilding of the institution and the development and implementation of U.S. foreign policy are instead languishing on the Senate floor—dozens, dozens.

Nominees who should be the face of the United States at international organizations—like the United Nations, NATO, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe—are in-

stead waiting for the Senate to act. The government of the People's Republic of China is watching. Even though the majority of this body has recognized that the Government of China represents the greatest geopolitical challenge to the United States, we are letting China eat our lunch on the world stage.

Our Republican colleagues have spoken at length in opposition to this administration's handling of the situation in Afghanistan, but they refuse to allow the Senate to vote on nominees who are critical to dealing with the refugee situation resulting from the U.S. withdrawal and the much-needed stabilization efforts.

By the way, a withdrawal that was already precooked by the Trump administration when it made a surrender deal with the Taliban that said we will leave on a date certain, we will release thousands of Taliban prisoners—which they did, to the Taliban, who became fighting soldiers—we ultimately will not only leave at a date certain, but we have done nothing to get any of the promises that the Taliban made enforced, and we reduce our troop level dramatically. That is what President Biden inherited.

Now, I have heard a lot about the handling of the situation in Afghanistan, but my colleagues refuse to allow the Senate to vote on nominees who are critical to dealing with the refugee situation resulting from that withdrawal and the much-needed stabilization efforts.

Nominees being held by the Republicans include the Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees, and Migration; and the Assistant Secretary for Conflict and Stabilization Operations. That cannot stand.

And for all the talk of needing to work with our allies and partners, how does holding our nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to Israel or the U.S. Ambassador to Canada actually advance U.S. interests?

It does not. It is seriously detrimental to our national security.

Before I ask unanimous consent, I understand Senator SCHUMER would like to speak prior to these UC requests.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PETERS). The majority leader.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, thank you. I have some brief remarks, and I want to thank my friend, the Senator from New Jersey, who will move in a few moments to have this Chamber approve a number of critical nominees for our national security and is going to be, shamefully, blocked.

He has been a great fighter not only for these men and women, but on foreign policy in general, one of the great leaders. And his passion for this issue comes from a desire to have us have the greatest strength abroad diplomatically and geopolitically as well. So I cannot thank him enough.

Mr. President, of all the mandates of the government, the most important is

protecting the American people from threats foreign or domestic. To do so, the President relies on an army of dedicated public servants—our expert Ambassadors, Diplomats, Under Secretaries, and Assistant Secretaries, who play a critical role in our government.

But for months, Senate Republicans have gone to great lengths to place pointless holds on over 100 of these nominees. The consequence is scores of empty desks in the State Department and in our Embassies and the Department of the Treasury and other Agencies.

These nominees are not controversial. They are routinely confirmed by consent in this Chamber, until a few people decided that they wanted to make a big show of this for whatever reason. No one ever did this before. No one ever did this—maybe one individual nominee here or there, but not all of the nominees. It is so risky to the security of the United States.

By this point in the Trump administration, for instance, both sides worked together to confirm 32 Ambassadors by voice vote. Most of us didn't like the Trump administration or the people he was appointing, but we had enough integrity, enough faith in the future of this country and the strength of this country not to let politics enter into what had been routine decisions.

Right now, Republican obstructionism has meant only four nominees have been agreed to. So the bottom line is—let me be clear—Republicans who are holding up these nominees are endangering our national security, making it harder for our country to respond to threats at home and abroad.

We hear a lot of talk about national security on the other side, but what it comes down to is that they are preventing 32 State Department nominees and 10 Defense Department nominees for quick confirmation. That is wrong, and I would hope that they would think about it and let these fine people go through the way that has been done under Democratic and Republican administrations in the past.

Mr. President, of all the mandates of government, the most important is protecting the American people from all threats, foreign and domestic. To do so, the President relies on an army of dedicated public servants: our expert diplomats, ambassadors, Under Secretaries, and Assistant Secretaries who play a critical role in our government.

But for months, some Senate Republicans have gone to great lengths to place pointless holds on over 100 of these nominees. The consequence has been scores of empty desks in the State Department, in our embassies, in the Department of the Treasury and countless other agencies.

These nominees are not controversial; they are routinely confirmed by consent in this Chamber. By this point in the Trump Administration, both sides worked together to confirm 32 ambassadors by voice vote. But right now, Republican obstruction has meant

only four such nominees have been agreed to.

Let me be clear: Republicans who are holding up these nominees are endangering our national security and making it harder for our country to respond to threats at home and abroad.

Our Republican counterparts always like to talk a good game on national security concerns, but when it comes down to it they are preventing 32 State Department nominees and at least 10 Department of Defense nominees from quick confirmation. All of these are career national security professionals who are eager to return to public service and project American strength abroad.

This is not how the Senate normally works to process these dedicated public servants. Indeed, a number of our colleagues on the other side have complained that the Senate is taking up a lot of time processing these individuals.

If Republicans take issue with the amount of time we are taking, they should speak with their own members who are directly prolonging the process through their obstruction. Republicans could decide right now to allow these nominees to go by consent.

This Chamber, under this leadership, is not tolerating a few Members who want to muck up the confirmation process just to make a scene.

In the weeks and months to come we are going to work through these nominees as long as it takes. I hope that our Republican colleagues immediately drop their objections and give President Biden the officials he needs in place to keep the American people safe.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, with that hope, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Calendar No. 239, Michele Jeanne Sison, of Maryland, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Ambassador, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (International Organization Affairs); that the nomination be confirmed; the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, reserving the right to object. I understand that multiple of my colleagues have objections to all of the nominees that the Senator from New Jersey is going to offer this evening. So I will be here to object on their behalf and also on my own behalf with regard to a few of them.

Mr. President, I want to address one of those nominees, Julianne Smith, the President's nominee to be United States Ambassador to NATO. This is a nominee to whom I object myself, and I want to explain why, briefly.

Before I do that, however, I just have to make one comment on the Senate majority leader's remarks about his own inability to get these nominees confirmed.

Now, I agree that many of these nominees are important, and that is, in fact, one of the reasons we should have a vote on them. The Ambassador to NATO, for instance, as I am about to argue, is a very important position. And the positions that she takes, the arguments that she makes are very important, which is why we ought to go on the record and actually have a vote.

But the Senate majority leader's comments—as if he has no control over the calendar. He is the majority leader of the United States Senate. He decides when we vote. He decides what we vote on.

What are we doing now?

The floor is empty. We could be voting.

What are we doing later this week?

He is gaveling us out of session so that Members across the aisle can go on a field trip to Glasgow, Scotland.

We could be voting.

It is getting a little rich to hear the Senate majority leader, who is doing almost nothing—have we brought up the defense bill?

No action. Multiple major issues—no action from the Senate majority leader.

If these nominees are so critical, he ought to be putting them on the floor for votes. He doesn't want to do that because, apparently, he can't control the floor or he just doesn't want to work for very long or he doesn't want to work very hard. I mean, I leave that to him. But it is quite ridiculous for the majority leader to blame Republicans, who cannot prevent votes.

Can I just be clear? Republicans do not have the ability to prevent votes on any of these nominees. The filibuster for these nominees doesn't exist.

We can vote whenever the majority leader wants. It is his decision when to bring them to the floor.

Now I want to comment on one just briefly. On Julianne Smith—one nominee tonight to whom I object—this is the President's nominee, as I said a moment ago, to be the next United States Ambassador to NATO.

I think the Senator from New Jersey and I can agree that this is a very important position. I am sure the Senator believes that, and I agree with him 100 percent. And I just want to take a minute and say why I think it is important and why we need to vote—actually vote—on her nomination.

A decade ago almost, 2014, after the Russian invasion—incursion into Ukraine, NATO allies finally recognized that they were not spending enough—our NATO allies—on their own defense and on our common defense. So they pledged as a group to commit at least 2 percent of their respective GDPs to their own defense and to meet that target by 2024. So far, large numbers of them are not on track to do so.

In fact, Ms. Smith said, in response to my own questions about this, that it is clear that a group of allies will fail to deliver on this pledge by 2024; and, currently, another group are not close to meeting it, although they say they hope to make up the difference.

Here is my point: The security situation has not improved since 2014. It has deteriorated. Russia, as we speak, is still menacing Ukraine. And now China is menacing Taiwan.

The United States is already facing hard choices, and we are going to face harder choices yet about how we allocate our defense resources, which are scarce; how we allocate our force posture, how we structure our force posture in a world that is growing more dangerous. And the China threat, in particular, is one that is going to make us make difficult choices in what we prioritize in the Asia-Pacific versus what we prioritize in Europe.

The bottom line is we need our allies to meet not only their 2-percent commitment, but we need them to do more in Europe for their own defense because we must focus on the deteriorating security situation in the Indo-Pacific and in the Asia-Pacific with regard to China and its imperial ambitions in Taiwan.

I asked Ms. Smith for her commitment that she will press our NATO allies not only to meet their 2-percent commitment, but to revise that commitment so that we can have a truly common defense in this era of multiplying challenges and deteriorating security. She has refused, unfortunately, to give me that commitment.

I can't block her nomination, but I can ask that we take a vote on it. And so for that reason, in a moment here, when Senator MENENDEZ brings her nomination to the floor, I will object and ask for a vote on her, in particular; and I will, as I said, object to others on behalf of my colleagues. With those comments, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. It is disingenuous to suggest that this can all happen by the majority leader and 60 votes. There were no calls when Republicans controlled this Chamber for votes on each and every nominee. On the contrary, as the leader said, large numbers of Trump nominees to the State Department or Ambassadorial or State Department positions were passed on voice. They were passed on voice vote.

I don't know. In the case of NATO, I think the nominee made it very clear before the committee—I know that our colleague is not a member of that particular committee—but she made it very clear before the committee that she was advocating for all of our allies to reach their 2-percent commitment.

And what better way to achieve it than to actually have an Ambassador at NATO to pursue that goal?

But if you don't have anybody there, guess what. You can't pursue that goal. So let me try again.

I want to ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 327, Anne A. Witkowski, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Conflict and Stabilization Operations).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. So we will continue to have conflict and stabilization without anybody being in charge.

I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 318, Christopher P. Lu, of Virginia, to be Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform, with the rank of Ambassador.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, on behalf of my colleagues, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Here is an example. We hear we want reform at the U.N., but we can't put the person there in charge of helping us reform the U.N.

I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 462, Julieta Valls Noyes, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Population, Refugees, and Migration).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. All right. I heard a lot of my colleagues talk about how we should get more SIV people from Afghanistan. This is the person who could help us do it.

I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 437, Julianne Smith, of Michigan, to be United States Permanent Representative on the Council of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Calendar No. 461, Marcia Stephens Bloom Bernicat, of New Jersey, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of the Minister-Counselor, to be Director General of the Foreign Service.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. I can't wait to hear the next objection to someone who would be Ambassador to Israel—to Israel.

I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 452, Thomas R. Nides, of Minnesota, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the State of Israel.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, on behalf of my colleagues, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. MENENDEZ. So we will have no Ambassador in Israel as we deal with the challenges of Iran and others in the region. It is mind-boggling, all of those who get up here and talk about our ally, the State of Israel, the importance of the State of Israel, but we won't have an Ambassador there to help us meet the challenges that Israel has.

I ask that it be in order to make the same request with respect to Executive Calendar No. 443, Michael Carpenter, of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with the rank of Ambassador.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HAWLEY. Mr. President, on behalf of my colleagues, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MENENDEZ. Well, let's see if we get a lucky one.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 453, David M. Cohen, of Pennsylvania, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Canada; that the Senate vote on confirmation of the nomination; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of David M. Cohen, of Pennsylvania, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Canada.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.